

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 22, 2023

Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 22, 2023, 7:30pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: ISW and CTP will not publish a campaign assessment (or maps) tomorrow, November 23, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. Coverage will resume Friday, November 24.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30pm ET on November 22. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 24 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian President Vladimir Putin reframed the Kremlin's stance on the Israeli-Hamas war to a much more anti-Israel position in an attempt to demonstrate the supposed hypocrisy of Western condemnations of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Putin stated that attendees of the G20 summit who expressed shock at the continued Russian war in Ukraine should instead be "shocked" by the "bloody" 2014 Euromaidan Revolution in Ukraine and the subsequent war that the "Kyiv regime waged against its own people" in Donbas and by the "extermination of the civilian population in Palestine, in the Gaza sector."^[1] Putin's November 22 statement on the Israel-Hamas war referring to the "extermination of the civilian population of Palestine" was a departure from previous Kremlin framing that largely focused on calling for peace and claiming that the Israel-Hamas war will distract from the provision of Western military aid to Ukraine.^[2] Putin's November 22 framing of the Israeli-Hamas war continues to exploit that war to undermine Western support for Ukraine, as ISW has previously assessed, and also signals potentially increasing support for Iranian interests in the region and an increased willingness to antagonize Israel.^[3]

Putin also reiterated boilerplate rhetoric falsely portraying Russia as willing to engage in meaningful negotiations, likely to pressure the West into prematurely pushing Ukraine to negotiate with Russia. Putin stated that the world must "think about how to stop this tragedy [the Russian-initiated war in Ukraine]," falsely signaling a willingness to engage in meaningful peace negotiations in Ukraine.^[4] Putin and other Russian officials have routinely falsely claimed that the Kremlin is ready to negotiate to end the war while signaling that the Kremlin maintains its maximalist objectives, including territorial claims and regime change.^[5] Kremlin officials have pushed this narrative while claiming that Ukraine is unwilling to negotiate with Russia, likely to coerce Western officials into prematurely offering concessions favorable to Russia rather than engage in meaningful, good faith negotiations.^[6] Ukrainian officials have routinely expressed their willingness to negotiate with Russia as soon as Russia removes its forces from Ukraine's internationally-recognized territory, including Donbas and Crimea.^[7] ISW has observed no indications that Putin does not retain his maximalist objectives and continues to assess that a

premature cessation of hostilities in Ukraine greatly increases the likelihood of renewed Russian aggression on terms far more favorable to the Kremlin in the near future.[8]

US National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby reported on November 21 that Iran is supplying Russia with glide bombs and that Iran may be preparing to transfer short-range ballistic missiles to Russia.[9] ISW has observed Russian forces increasingly using glide bombs, particularly modified FAB-500, KAB-500, and RPK-500 aerial bombs equipped with glide bomb structures, in the Lyman and Kherson directions.[10] It is unclear whether Kirby meant that Iran is supplying Russia with glide bomb components or with fully constructed glide bombs. The Critical Threats Project (CTP)-ISW's Iran Update reported on August 14 that Iran produces a variety of glide bombs domestically, such as the Ghaem glide bombs, Yasin long-range glide bombs, Sadid glide bombs, and Balaban glide bombs.[11] Iran commonly uses these bombs with its various drone platforms, likely including the Shahed-131/136 drones that Iran supplies to Russia. A Russian milblogger previously amplified claims that Russian Su-25 aircraft may be compatible with Iranian glide bombs.[12] Iran presented several glide bomb variants at the Russian Army-2023 Forum in Moscow in August 2023 and possibly during Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's visit to Tehran in September 2023.[13] Kirby added that Iran also continues to supply Russia with drones and artillery ammunition.[14] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Deputy Chief Major General Vadym Skibitskyi stated on November 6 that Iran may continue to send small batches of Shahed-131/136 drones to Russia despite increased Russian efforts to produce Shahed drones domestically and Iran's fulfillment of its first Shahed supply contracts with Russia.[15] CTP-ISW previously assessed that Iran and Russia may conclude a drone and missile sale agreement following the expiration of UN missile restrictions against Iranian missile and missile-related technology exports on October 18, 2023.[16]

The Kremlin appears to be inexplicably concerned about the outcome of the upcoming March 2024 Russian presidential elections, despite apparent widespread Russian approval of Putin. Russian Central Election Commission (CEC) Chairperson Ella Pamfilova stated on November 21 that some Russian citizens who left Russia and others still in Russia have already begun efforts to discredit the upcoming Russian presidential elections.[17] Pamfilova's statement suggests that the Russian government will continue to intensify censorship efforts under the guise of fighting attempted internal election meddling ahead of the presidential elections. Putin also stated on November 15 that the Russian government will suppress any foreign or domestic election interference at a meeting with Russian election commission representatives.[18] Two unnamed sources from Russian federal and regional authorities told Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* in an article published on November 22 that the Kremlin instructed Russian regional authorities to stop relatives of mobilized personnel from protesting by paying them.[19] The sources added that the Kremlin advised Russian regional governments to "make every effort" to ensure that the governments issue payments to the relatives of mobilized personnel and address other complaints about poor treatment of mobilized personnel in response to rising dissatisfaction among the relatives.[20] The sources also told *Verstka* that the Kremlin considers the relatives of mobilized personnel a social group that may pose one of the greatest threats to the beginning of Putin's still unannounced presidential campaign.[21]

The Kremlin may also be concerned about a perceived lack of support for Putin from the Russian veteran community.[22] This veteran community is a subsection of the Russian ultranationalist community and has routinely argued in favor of full mobilization and continued Russian offensive operations in Ukraine, as opposed to freezing the current frontlines.[23] The Kremlin's apparent concern about Putin's support is odd given that the Levada Center - an independent Russian polling organization - found that 82 percent of Russians approve of Putin's performance as of October

2023.[24] The Kremlin may also want Putin to receive an even higher percentage of the vote and may be attempting to placate specific groups that vocally express dissatisfaction with Putin’s decisions.

Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin called for Russia to codify an unspecified state ideology in the Russian constitution, suggesting that some Russian officials may want to explicitly end nominal constitutional protections for civil rights, democratic pluralism, and ethnic equality. Bastrykin made the call on November 22 during a conference about the Russian constitution at the Russian Ministry of Justice in Moscow and argued that dismissing his call would not work.[25] Bastrykin previously called on Russian Constitutional Court Chairperson Valery Zorkin to look into ways of establishing an unspecified state ideology in May 2023, although Zorkin rebuffed Bastrykin by noting that the current constitution contains a set of values that protect civil society.[26] The Russian constitution declares that Russia is a democratic state in which Russia’s multinational people should exercise power directly and that the “supreme direct expression” of that power are referendums and free elections.[27] The constitution establishes that the Russian state’s obligation is to recognize, observe, and protect human and civil rights.[28] Article 13 of the Russian constitution notably forbids Russia from proclaiming a state ideology and commits the Russian state to recognize ideological diversity, political diversity, and a multi-party system.[29] Bastrykin's calls would require Russian officials to amend or even repeal Article 13 of the Russian constitution, and possibly would require more extensive amendments depending on the potential new state ideology. Russia adopted its current constitution in 1993 and laid out codified state protections for multiethnic democratic pluralism and human and civil rights to mark a definitive break with the Soviet system of autocratic one-party ideological rule. Bastrykin, who has previously advocated for Stalinist-era domestic policies, may hope that a new ideology enshrined in the Russian constitution would further weaken or outright cancel Russia’s existing constitutional commitment to democratic pluralism and human and civil rights.[30] Bastrykin may be voicing this position on behalf of a wider group of Russian officials wishing to end these nominal constitutional protections, but the Kremlin has shown no indication that it wishes to do away with the veneer of legitimacy that these nominal constitutional protections offer.[31]

Bastrykin has yet to detail what a potential Russian state ideology should be, although the Kremlin’s support for Russian ultranationalism would likely heavily influence any potential Russian state ideology. The Kremlin has heavily courted the Russian ultranationalist community against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, a community that supports Russian imperial goals, efforts to Russify and ethnically cleanse occupied territories, and nationalist demands to protect ethnic Russian communities.[32] The focus on protecting and enforcing the Russian ethnic identity would likely be a key component of any state ideology should the Kremlin entertain Bastrykin’s calls. Bastrykin himself may have had this Russian ultranationalism in mind when he called for a state ideology given that he has heavily sought to capitalize on heightened ethnic tensions in Russia and is increasingly casting himself as a prominent anti-migration figure.[33] Bastrykin and the Russian Investigative Committee have reportedly directly engaged in the forced deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia and the forced placement of Ukrainian children into Russian military training programs — parts of a campaign to destroy Ukrainian ethnic identity and Russify Ukraine.[34] The Kremlin’s support for Russian ultranationalism is also heavily focused on promoting Russian Orthodoxy and appeals to “traditional” social values. Putin most recently signed a decree on November 22 declaring 2024 the “Year of the Family” to focus on preserving traditional family values.[35] ISW has previously assessed that the war in Ukraine is likely exacerbating an emerging identity crisis within Russian society resulting from tensions between Russian identity and Russian nationalism.[36] This crisis as well as pronounced ethnoreligious tensions will likely worsen if the ultranationalist Kremlin decides to pursue codifying a state ideology. **Putin and elements of the Kremlin, highly aware of the potential for these ethnic, religious, and national**

tensions to prompt instability and discontent, are unlikely to support Bastrykin's calls to codify an explicit state ideology in the short term.

Bloomberg reported on November 21 that the European Union (EU) proposed a plan to strengthen security commitments from EU member states to

Ukraine.[37] *Bloomberg* reported, citing a draft proposal, that the EU's proposal would build on existing bilateral agreements established within the framework of the Group of Seven's (G7) declaration on security guarantees for Ukraine. The proposal reportedly includes mechanisms for: long-term military aid; training of Ukrainian forces; cooperation with Ukraine's domestic defense industrial base (DIB); strengthening Ukraine's ability to counter cyber and hybrid threats; demining assistance; support for Ukraine's reform agenda as part of the EU accession process; assistance for Ukraine's energy transition and nuclear safety efforts; and the sharing of intelligence and satellite imagery. EU Foreign Affairs Representative Josep Borrell stated on November 13 that Ukraine is the EU's top priority and that the EU's commitment to Ukraine will not waiver.[38] *Bloomberg* reported that EU member states are expected to consider the EU's draft proposal in December 2023.

Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of November 21 to 22. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces shot down all 14 Shahed-131/136 drones that Russia launched at Ukraine.[39] Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces also launched two missiles, of which one Kh-22 cruise missile fell in an unpopulated area in Zaporizhia Oblast.[40] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on November 21 that Russian forces have paused their use of cruise and ballistic missiles and began using KAB glide bombs and Kh-59 and Kh-31 missiles to conduct strikes against Ukraine.[41]

Russian milbloggers appear to be focusing renewed complaints against the Russian military command for what milbloggers perceive as poor choices that contribute to Russian casualties. Russian milbloggers expressed anger on November 21 and 22 after a Ukrainian HIMARS strike on Kumachove, Donetsk Oblast (37km southeast of Donetsk City and 61km from the frontline) allegedly killed over 25 and injured over 100 personnel of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) who were attending a concert for a Russian military holiday on November 19.[42] The milbloggers largely focused on poor security measures, criticizing the Russian command for allowing a large gathering of people within HIMARS range of the frontline in violation of operational security principles.[43] The milbloggers largely called for the Russian military to ban such events and expressed frustration that the Russian military command has not learned this lesson despite nearly two years of war and multiple instances in which publicly available information facilitated Ukrainian strikes.[44]

Though this strike does not affect the battlefield situation in Ukraine, the Russian milbloggers' reaction to this strike reflects the Russian ultranationalist community's continued frustration with the Russian military command's management of the war. Russian milbloggers have recently begun to complain about the Russian military command following a period of self-censorship likely prompted by the death of Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin and the arrests of highly critical Russian ultranationalist milbloggers in summer 2023.[45] The milbloggers' complaints have largely focused on how the Russian military command's poor conduct of the war and poor discipline have led to poor treatment of Russian military personnel and casualties instead of focusing on the success or failure of Russian military operations. Russian milbloggers have routinely complained that the Russian military command's orders to use "meat assaults" to push Ukrainian forces from positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast have led to extensive Russian casualties, for example.[46]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin reframed the Kremlin’s stance on the Israeli-Hamas war to a much more anti-Israel position in an attempt to demonstrate the supposed hypocrisy of Western condemnations of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.**
- **Putin also reiterated boilerplate rhetoric falsely portraying Russia as willing to engage in meaningful negotiations, likely to pressure the West into prematurely pushing Ukraine to negotiate with Russia.**
- **US National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby reported on November 21 that Iran is supplying Russia with glide bombs and that Iran may be preparing to transfer short-range ballistic missiles to Russia.**
- **The Kremlin appears to be inexplicably concerned about the outcome of the upcoming March 2024 Russian presidential elections, despite apparent widespread Russian approval of Putin.**
- **Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin called for Russia to codify an unspecified state ideology in the Russian constitution, suggesting that some Russian officials may want to explicitly end nominal constitutional protections for civil rights, democratic pluralism, and ethnic equality.**
- **Bastrykin has yet to detail what a potential Russian state ideology should be, although the Kremlin’s support for Russian ultranationalism would likely heavily influence any potential Russian state ideology.**
- **Bloomberg reported on November 21 that the European Union (EU) proposed a plan to strengthen security commitments from EU member states to Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of November 21 to 22.**
- **Russian milbloggers appear to be focusing renewed complaints against the Russian military command for what milbloggers perceive as poor choices that contribute to Russian casualties.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, northwest of Horlivka, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, in western Zaporizhia Oblast, and in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast and advanced east of Synkivka.**
- **The Russian Federation Council approved the Russian 2024-2026 federal budget on November 22, and Russian officials continue to emphasize social spending over defense expenditures.**
- **The Russian government and occupation authorities continue to forcibly deport children in occupied Ukraine to Russia under medical treatment schemes.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

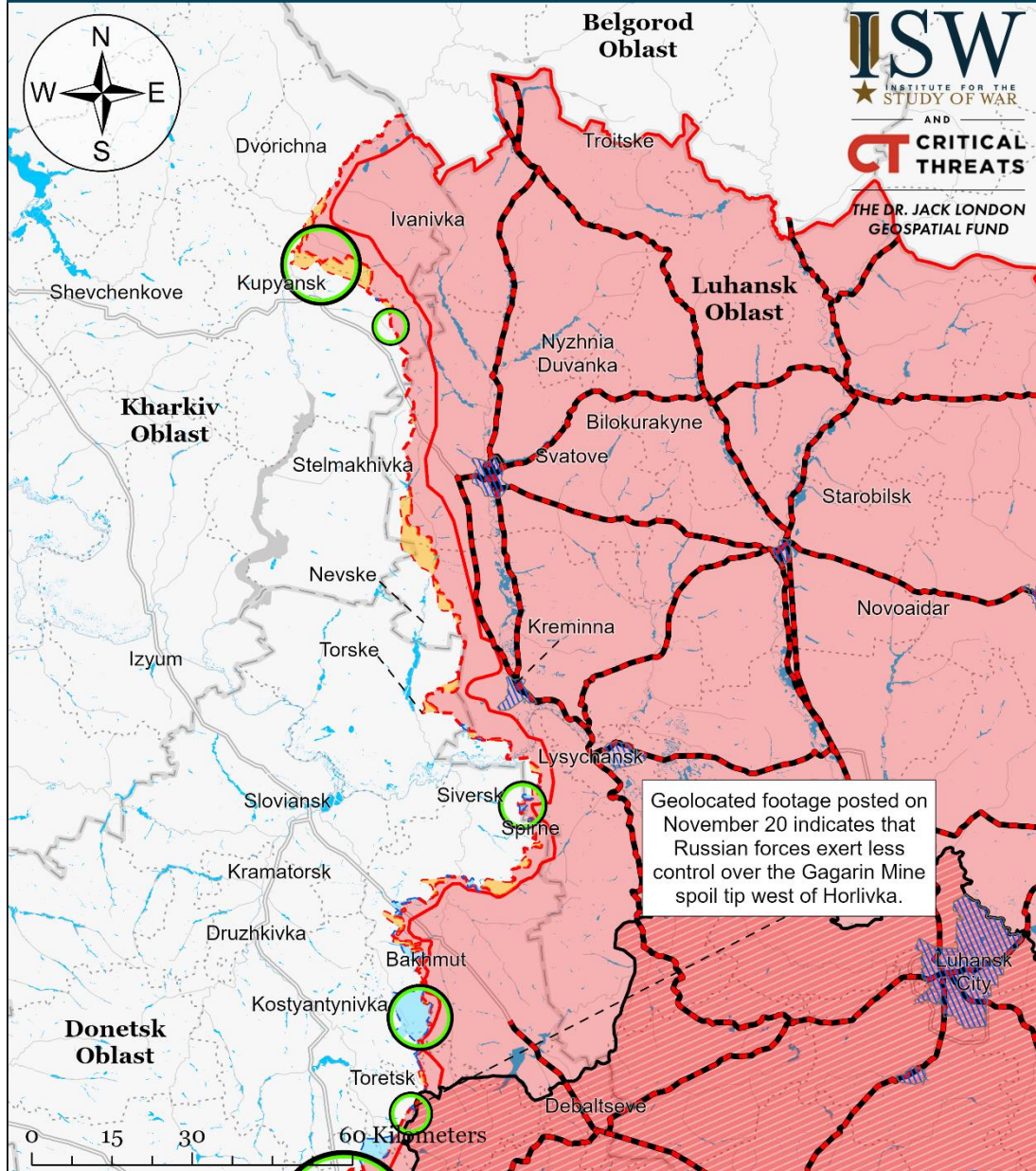
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 22 and made a confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on November 22 indicates that Russian forces made a limited advance east of Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk).[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces slightly advanced in the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna), although ISW has not observed visual evidence of this claim.[48] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka and Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), northeast and east of Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), and in the direction of Siversk (19km south of Kreminna).[49] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets assessed that Russian forces in the Kupyansk direction are completing a force regrouping and may soon increase the pace of offensive operations in the area.[50]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Kupyansk and south of Kreminna on November 22. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka and Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[51] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near the Serebryanske forest area and Torske (14km west of Kreminna).[52]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

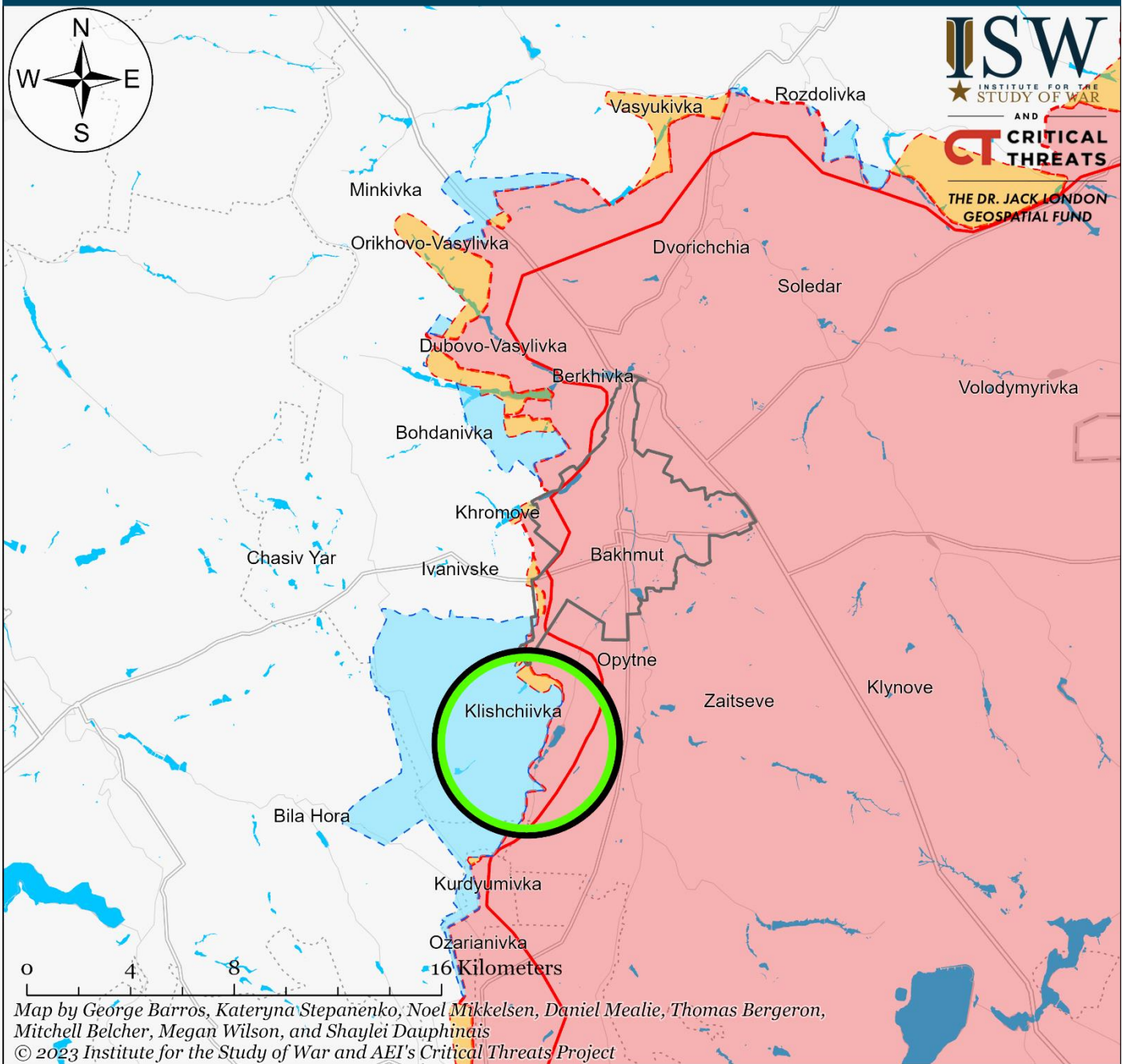
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued assaults south of Bakhmut on November 22, although Ukrainian forces did not make any confirmed or claimed gains.[53]

Russian forces continued ground attacks near Bakhmut on November 22 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[54] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces successfully established a foothold on the northern outskirts of Klishchiivka, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[55] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are assaulting Ukrainian positions on tactical heights near Klishchiivka and near Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), and Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[56] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage purporting to show elements of the Russian 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division operating near Bakhmut.[57] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 119th and 137th VDV Regiments (both of the 106th VDV Division) are also operating in the Bakhmut direction.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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- Bakhmut City Limits
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

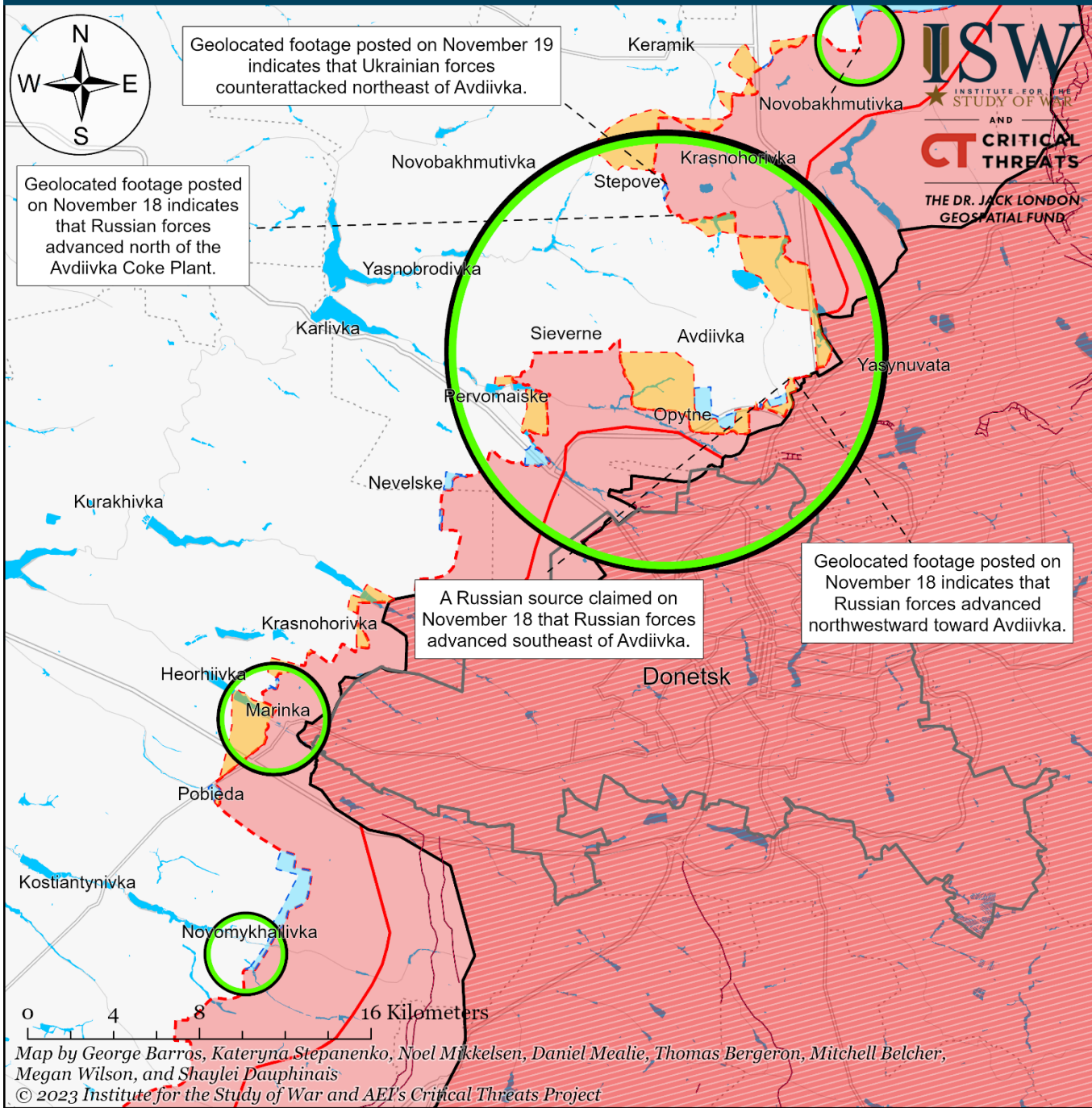
Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks northwest of Horlivka on November 22. The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled a Ukrainian assault near Pivdenne (immediately northwest of Horlivka).[59] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian light infantry assaults near waste heaps northwest of Horlivka.[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that artillery elements of the Russian 132nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps) repelled Ukrainian attacks northwest of Horlivka.[61]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian counterattacks northwest of Horlivka near Pivdenne on November 22.[62]

Russian forces intensified offensive operations near Avdiivka and reportedly advanced on Avdiivka's southeastern outskirts on November 22. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted more than 22 unsuccessful assaults east of Novobakhmutivka (12km northwest of Avdiivka); north of Lastochkyne (5km west of Avdiivka); and near Avdiivka, Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[63] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that Russian forces significantly intensified assault operations near Avdiivka and that Ukrainian forces in the area have noted a 25 to 30 percent increase in Russian assaults over the past day.[64] Shtupun stated that Russian forces conducted mechanized assaults with around a dozen armored vehicles in the Avdiivka direction and that Ukrainian forces repelled the assaults, destroying two tanks and seven armored fighting vehicles.[65] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces conducted a successful surprise attack and quickly occupied five buildings in the industrial zone on Avdiivka's southeastern outskirts.[66] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also captured Ukrainian defensive fortifications southwest of the industrial zone.[67] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces made unspecified gains near Stepove (3km north of Avdiivka) and that the settlement remains a contested "gray zone." [68] Shtupun noted that Russian aviation has also intensified operations near Avdiivka, and Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces intensified artillery and air strikes on Ukrainian positions on Avdiivka's northern and southern flanks.[69] Shtupun stated that weather conditions are not currently impacting the tempo of hostilities in the Avdiivka direction and that reduced foliage in the area due to cold weather is improving Ukrainian visibility against Russian infantry assaults.[70] Ukrainian military observer Konstyantyn Mashovets stated that the Russian command committed elements of the 255th Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) to battles in the Avdiivka direction.[71]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked north of Avdiivka near Stepove on November 22 but did not specify an outcome.[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



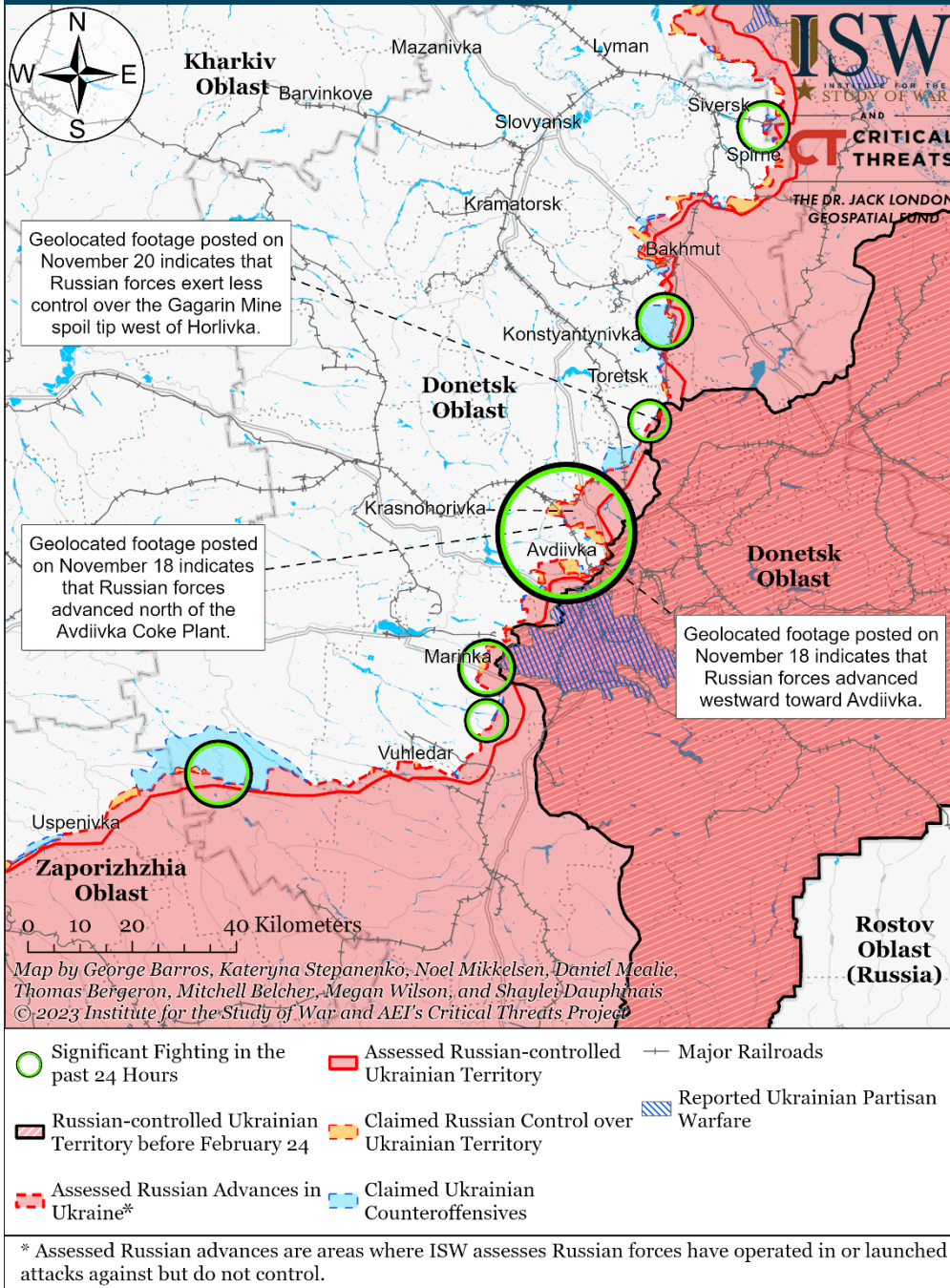
- Donetsk City Limits
- ▬ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▬ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▬ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▬ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▬ Russian Field Fortifications

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 22 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 18 Russian assaults near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (11km southwest of Donetsk City).[73] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Marinka and Novomykhailivka, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[74] Yaroslav Chepurnyi, a spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Marinka direction, stated that Russian forces have stormed Ukrainian positions in the Marinka direction over 150 times and have launched over 300 strike drones in the past week.[75]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed counterattacks west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 22.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

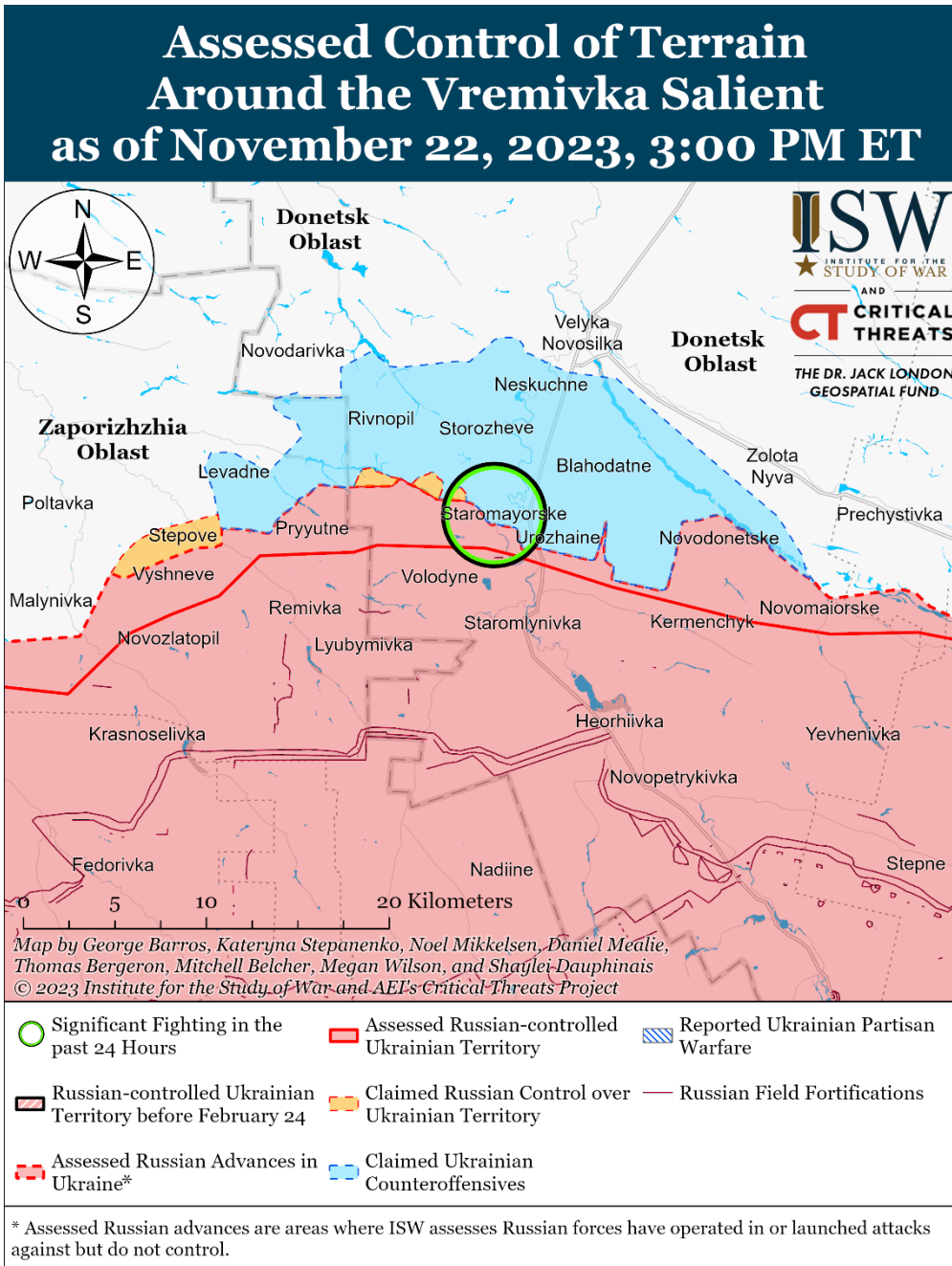


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 22. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Pryyutne (14km southwest

of Velyka Novosilka).[76] The Russian “Vostok” Battalion claimed that there is increased activity in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area.[77]

Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 22 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks west of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[78] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are also attempting to advance near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[79] A Russian news aggregator claimed on November 21 that Russian forces counterattacked in the direction of Pryyutne, Staromayorske, and Urozhaine.[80] Another Russian milblogger published footage on November 22 claiming to show elements of the Russian 5th Guards Tank Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) striking Ukrainian positions west of Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[81]



Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 22 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[82] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian attacks north of Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne) and west of Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[83] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attacks along the Robotyne-Verbove line.[84] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian armored assault near Robotyne.[85] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also unsuccessfully attacked near Novofedorivka (15km northeast of Robotyne).[86]

Russian forces continued unsuccessful attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 22. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Robotyne and Kamianske (30km southwest of Orikhiv).[87] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 56th Air Assault (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are defending north of Verbove.[88]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



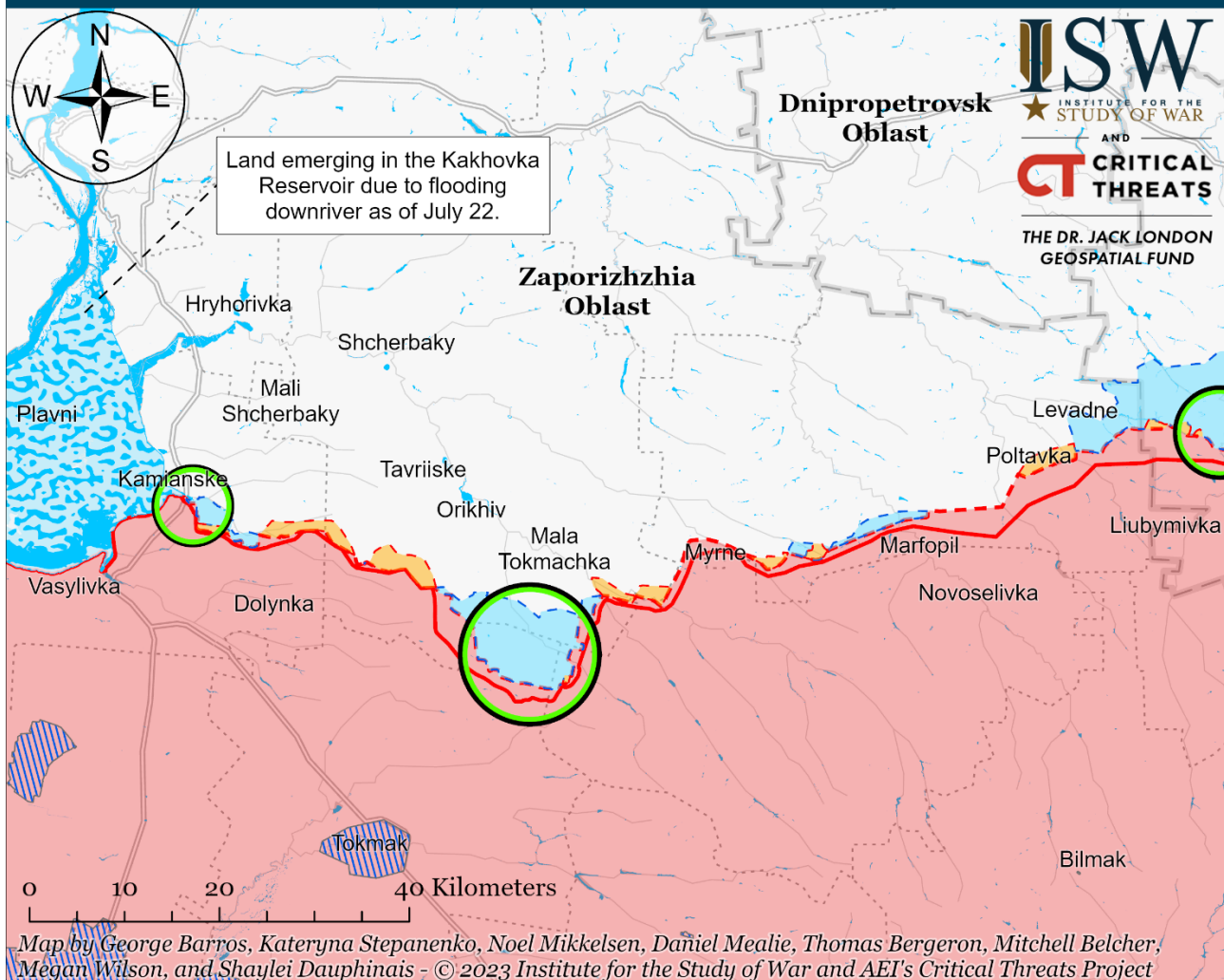
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| Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir |
| Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives | Russian Field Fortifications |

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

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Ukrainian forces maintain positions in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast and reportedly attacked in the area on November 22. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in left bank Kherson Oblast.[89] Russian milbloggers widely acknowledged the continued Ukrainian presence in Krynyky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[90] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces also maintain positions and attacked near Poyma (12km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River), Pishchanivka (13km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River), Pidstepne (17km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River),

and the Antonivsky Roadway and Railway Bridges.[91] Mashovets stated that there is also unspecified activity west of Oleshky (7km south of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River).[92]

Russian forces continued assaults in left bank Kherson Oblast on November 22 but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing into Krynyky from the east.[93] Mashovets stated that Russian forces have narrowed the Ukrainian bridgehead near Krynyky in the past few days.[94] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 328th VDV Regiment (104th VDV Division) are attacking Krynyky from Korsunka (45km northeast of Kherson City and 1km from the Dnipro River) and added that Russian forces are constantly attacking along the Oleshky-Nova Kakhovka coastal road (7km south to 53km northeast of Kherson City).[95]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 22, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

The Russian MoD claimed on November 22 that Russian forces destroyed four Ukrainian naval drones and three aerial drones targeting Crimea.[96] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger suggested that Ukraine was targeting a Black Sea Fleet (BSF) base near Yevpatoria (64km north of Sevastopol).[97]

Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

The Russian Federation Council approved the Russian 2024-2026 federal budget on November 22, and Russian officials continue to emphasize social spending over defense expenditures.[98] Prior versions of the federal budget that the Russian State Duma previously approved focused on Russian defense expenses, though the allocation of funds between defense, social, and other spheres in the November 22 budget is currently unclear.[99] Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov noted that Russia's main budgetary focuses for the next three years are defense and security needs, so-called "special military operations," and the state's social obligations to Russian citizens.[100] Federation Council Budget Committee Chairperson Anatoly Artamonov highlighted the social and cultural spending allocated in the budget and emphasized that Russia's "priority areas of spending remain in the social sphere." [101]

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Nothing significant to report

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

The Russian government and occupation authorities continue to forcibly deport children in occupied Ukraine to Russia under medical treatment schemes. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration announced on November 22 that the Kherson Oblast occupation Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the office of Kremlin-appointed Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova transported Ukrainian teenagers with disabilities from occupied Kherson Oblast to a rehabilitation center in Penza Oblast.[102] The Kherson Oblast occupation Social Fund of Russia announced on November 20 that it will launch a program on January 1, 2024 wherein residents of occupied Kherson Oblast from unspecified "preferential categories" can apply for fully funded travel to and treatment at sanatorium-resorts.[103]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russia continues to posture itself as an effective partner to China. Russian State Duma Chairperson Vyacheslav Volodin and a Duma delegation arrived in Nanjing as part of a state visit to China from November 21 to 23.[104] Volodin met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee Chairperson Zhao Leji, and Jiangsu province regional officials on interregional technological cooperation and strengthening Russian-Chinese economic ties.[105]

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) held a joint meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Defense Ministers, and the Committee of Secretaries of the CSTO's member states' Security Councils on November 22 in Minsk.[106] The CSTO reported that representatives from Armenia did not attend this meeting.[107]

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

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